

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2197

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: COMMUNISTS, FAR LEFT CONTENTING LEADERSHIP IN TWO UNIONS

REF: LISBON 1324

SUMMARY: LEADERSHIP OF CHEMICAL WORKERS' AND METALLURGISTS' UNIONS IS CURRENTLY UP FOR GRABS, WITH COMMUNISTS ATTEMPTING TO OUST FAR LEFTISTS FROM FORMER AND FAR LEFTISTS ON OFFENSIVE AGAINST INCUMBENT COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP OF LATTER. COMMUNISTS CONTINUE TO PURSUE "RESPONSIBLE" POLICY AND TO IDENTIFY THEIR AIMS WITH THOSE OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM). END
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SUMMARY.

1. METALLURGICAL WORKERS' FEDERATION IS CURRENTLY IN PROCESS ELABORATING ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION FOR INDUSTRY-WIDE CONTRACT DISCUSSIONS. UNION'S LEADERSHIP, CONTROLLED BY COMMUNISTS (PCP), HAS ALREADY STATED ITS INTENTION TO PURSUE "REALISTIC" POLICY IN REGARD TO WAGES. UNION WILL NOT SEEK TO OBTAIN WAGE SCALE SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH LARGEST ENTERPRISES ARE IN POSITION TO OFFER. IT IS AWARE THAT SMALLER COMPANIES COULD NEITHER AFFORD NOR SURVIVE SUCH RATES, AND THIS WOULD SERVE ONLY TO CREATE FURTHER UNEMPLOYMENT. IT INTENDS TO EXPLAIN ITS POSITION TO UNION MEMBERS BY MEANS OF NATIONAL "CAMPAIGN OF METALLURGICAL DYNAMIZATION" IN WHICH ELEMENTS OF AFM WILL BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.

2. MARCH 22 DEMONSTRATION OF METALLURGICAL WORKERS OPPOSED TO CURRENT LEADERSHIP WAS SUPPORTED, AMONG OTHERS, BY FAR LEFT MES AND UDP. DEMONSTRATORS ATTACKED UNION LEADERSHIP AS "SOCIAL-FASCIST" (TERM USED BY FAR LEFT TO DESCRIBE PCP), ATTEMPTING UPON CONCLUSION OF RALLY TO COOUPY UNION HEADQUARTERS. DEMONSTRATORS WERE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BY INTERVENTION OF UNITS FROM COPCON. DISSIDENTS NOW DEMANDING THAT CURRENT LEADERSHIP BE REPLACED BY A PROVISIONAL COMMISSION TO RUN UNION'S AFFAIRS UNTIL NEW ELECTION IS ORGANIZED.

3. IN CHEMICAL WORKERS UNION, ROLES ARE REVERSED. INITIALLY SUCCESSFUL PCP-LED ASSAULT ON INCUMBENT LEADERSHIP (COALITION OF FAR-LEFT AOC WITH SOCIALISTS - REFTEL) IS FACING SHOWDOWN VOTE MARCH 23. CURRENT UNION LEADERSHIP, WHICH ATTEMPTED BLOCK ELECTIONS, NOW HOLDING TO POSITION THAT IT WILL PARTICIPATE: BY SO DOING IT IS DEMONSTRATING ITS WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH ARMED FORCES, WHO HAVE APPEALED FOR TRU DEMOCRATS AND PROGRESSIVES TO WORK IN BEHALF OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, UNION LEADERSHIP IS MAKING CLEAR ITS DISTASTE FOR POLICIES OF LABOR MINISTRY, EMPHASIZING THAT IT IS NOT CONFUSING MINISTRY WITH THOSE WHO MADE APRIL 25 REVOLUTION OR WHO DEFENDED PORTUGAL ON MARCH 11 AGAINST COUP LAUNCHED BY AMERICAN IMPERIALISM.

4. COMMENT: WHILE MARCH 11 COUP ATTEMPT HAS GIVEN PCP AND ALLIES MAJOR BOOST ON NATIONAL ELECTORAL LEVEL, ITS IMPACT ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LEVEL UNION ELECTIONS APPEARS TO BE LIMITED. ONGOING STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF LABOR MOVEMENT APPEARS TO BE AS INTENSE AS EVER, WITH FAR LEFT DEMONSTRATING ABILITY TO FORM ALLIANCES OF CONVENIENCE IN ORDER TO CHALLENGE PCP AND ITS ALLIES.
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